

## George Ireland and the "Riverstone Hotel"

*Ross & Shirley Seale*

George Ireland, licensee of the "Riverstone Hotel" from 1883 -1892, was born in 1837 the son of John Ireland, a hotel keeper of Burwood.

In 1866 he married Agnes McCulloch, daughter of a notable Riverstone identity, at Parramatta. His brother William, married Julia Ann Seale, daughter of Thomas Seale, also a hotel keeper of Burwood. Mary Ann Ireland married Agnes McCulloch's brother.

The Seale, McCulloch and Ireland families were a close group and suffered adversity together, as shown by a shared grave in May's Hill Cemetery, which records the deaths of:

Hylton Charles Seale	died 18.3.1876	16 days
Melbourne Harry Seale	" 28.8.1876	16 months
Robert John Ireland	" 21.4.1881	1 year
Montague Nelson Ireland	" 4.2.1885	1 year

In the next plot are recorded the deaths of two McCullochs.

Mr and Mrs George Ireland took a great interest in the local community.

Mrs Ireland donated the font and "fair white linen" to the Anglican church of St Paul's in Riverstone and after the opening service in 1885, entertained the clergy and a number of friends "most hospitably" at the Riverstone Hotel.

The Hotel was also made available for community meetings such as that held in October 1889 to elect a permanent Progress Committee, and also in 1889 for 14 members from Riverstone already in the Mounted Infantry. *Windsor & Richmond Gazette*.

*The Cumberland Mercury*, Wednesday April 1, 1885 showed the following ads:

On 18th October 1889 the Gazette reported that Mr Ireland, as well as Messrs Wood, Shepherd, Mitchell and Shouter are making their pile on the gold fields, having previously reported on 10th August of the same year that "Mr G. Ireland and W. Links are off gold mining at Christmas to Mount Morgan."

Harrington McMaster Ireland, born 1874, was the first child of George Ireland. His association with the district lasted long after his father relinquished the licence of "The Riverstone Hotel", as *The Australian* newspaper reports a contest that took place at "Mr Joseph's Hotel" (the next licensee 1893 -1899) in April 1899, between Mr H. Ireland and Mr A. Buckley. Obviously a challenge match, it created much interest.

"An exciting billiard match took place here last week.....Mr Ireland played with a broom handle and Buckley with a cue. Ireland won by 2 points."

*The Australian* 21.4.1899.

Harrington Ireland is shown in the 1901 Electoral Roll for Riverstone as a butcher, but he also raised race horses. His best known was "Major" which won at Rooty Hill in one event in February 1899, and placed second in another, presumably at the same meeting. He was then trained to run at Rosebery Park, where in March 1899 he was placed second, at long odds.

*The Australian* 12.2.1899 and 24.3.1899.